(a) whether Government have any proposal to make remote villages and small and medium towns spots of tourist attraction;

(b) if so, the details thereof,

(c) whether Government is focusing on development of tourism in peripheral areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether orchards are being planted or proposed to be planted beside highways in order to encourage tourism; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for infrastructure development in rural sites having tourism potential under the ongoing scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations & Circuits, while community participation and the capacity building including skill up-gradation in such rural sites are being supported through Capacity Building for Service Providers Scheme of the Ministry and Government of India-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Endogenous Tourism Project.

The objective is to enable visitors to gain first hand experience of diverse rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations and in villages which have core-competency in terms of craft/handlooms/textiles etc. So far 139 rural sites have been sanctioned.

(e) and (f) There is no such scheme or proposal with the Ministry of Tourism.

Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar islands

828. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is tremendous potentiality for Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands;

(b) if so, whether such opportunity was not exploited; if so the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there has been a study and survey relating to such potentiality and possibility to exploit; and

(d) when such study was made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (d) The development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments/ UT Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance to them for tourism related projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them. To facilitate the efforts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration, Government of India had prepared in 2003 a 20-Year Perspective Plan for development of tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

During the 10th Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs. 6.25 lakh was sanctioned by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to Andaman and Nicobar Islands for tourism related activities. The Government of India had also allocated Rs.76.5 crore as additional Central Assistance under Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme for up-gradation of tourism in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to be utilized in 3 consecutive years, *i.e.* 2006-07 to 2008-09.

Development of tourist circuit in Orissa

829. SHRIMATI RENUBALA PRADHAN:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to develop the holy city of Puri in Orissa as a mega tourist circuit;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also proposed to enhance security in and around the holy temple and adjoining sea beach; and

(d) if so, what is the action plan of the Centre to help the State Government both financially and physically for successful execution of this project?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Development and promotion of tourism is undertaken primarily by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations for tourism related infrastructure projects under the scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development of Destinations/Circuits which are identified in consultation and interaction with them and sanctioned subject to availability of funds and *inter-se priority*.

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned a project - Development of Bhubaneshwar - Puri - Chilika as a mega circuit for a total amount of Rs. 30.22 crore out of which an amount of Rs. 14.98 crore has been earmarked for development of Puri.

Instructions have been issued to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to ensure law and order and security around important tourist destinations, hotels etc.

Special scheme for promoting tourism

830. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has proposed any special scheme for promoting the tourism in the country which is affected due to recent terror activities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the funds allocated for this purpose, State-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons, therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Tourism has taken several initiatives for promoting tourism to the country after the recent terrorist attacks.